

Who can I call to talk about my test results?

The Office of Environmental Health at:

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For additional information on environmental health matters, please call:

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This publication can be made available in alternative format. Please call the number listed above.

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***What you should
know about
Arsenic
in the
groundwater***



**Arizona Department
of Health Services**



What is Arsenic?

Arsenic is a naturally occurring metal in soils. Eating foods or drinking water with too much arsenic can cause health problems.

In Arizona, arsenic is present in almost all groundwater supplies. Because private wells are the primary source of water for rural residents of Arizona, making sure the water is free of arsenic is important.

The Office of Environmental Health recommends testing all new wells for arsenic and other primary metals before the water is used for drinking or cooking purposes.

How much arsenic is too much?

Arizona has developed a simple method to determine if the arsenic levels are too high, using a color code.

Green: Less than 10 parts per billion (ppb) or 0.01 milligrams per liter (mg/L). Drinking or cooking with the water is OK.

Yellow: Between 11 and 49 parts per billion (ppb) or 0.011 to 0.049 milligrams per liter (mg/L). Water use should be limited for drinking and cooking.

Red: Above 50 parts per billion (ppb) greater than 0.050 milligrams per liter (mg/L). **Water should NOT be used for drinking or cooking!**

All water can be used for bathing, laundry, and tooth brushing.

How can arsenic be removed from the water?

Arsenic can be removed from the water by several methods, but the most common method for household use is by a reverse osmosis filtration system.

Can arsenic be removed by boiling the water?

Arsenic is a metal, and cannot be removed by boiling the water before use. In fact, boiling the water may increase the concentration of arsenic.

How can arsenic hurt me or my family?

Arsenic in small amounts, taken over many years, can cause some types of

cancers, with a form of skin cancer being the most common. In higher concentrations arsenic can cause poisoning, which may result in acute illness and even death.

Why is this information being made available?

Information on arsenic exposures around Arizona have been available for several years. It is only recently that people have begun moving into areas where high arsenic levels may affect large numbers of people. Because of these large numbers, the Office of Environmental Health is providing more detailed information to the public on how to protect themselves.

Other recommended actions for private wells

The Office of Environmental Health recommends that all private wells be tested once per year for bacteriological and nitrate contamination from septic systems.